BACKGROUND: This instruction sheet provides general guidelines on the use of parenthetical qualifiers in authorized demographic group terms. For specific information about parenthetical qualifiers in a particular category, see the instruction sheet for the category (e.g., L 520, Ethnic/Cultural Category).

1. General rule. When proposing a word or phrase as a new demographic group term, it may be necessary to use a parenthetical qualifier if the word or phrase has more than one dictionary definition. Add the qualifier to the word or phrase to indicate which of the several definitions is intended for the term in question. *Examples:*

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Deacons (Clergy)

Washingtonians (District of Columbia)

Washingtonians (Washington State)
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2. Phrases vs. qualifiers. In many cases the parenthetical qualifier can be avoided by adding an adjectival qualifier to create a phrase instead. Prefer phrases of this type to parenthetical qualifiers. *Example:*

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Lay deacons
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not Deacons (Laity)

3. Categories of terms routinely qualified. Some categories of terms are routinely qualified by standard parenthetical qualifiers. *Examples:*

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Democratic Party members (South Africa)

Muscogee (North American people)
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4. Commonly accepted meanings. Do not add a qualifier to a term used in its commonly accepted meaning even though it may have other meanings as well, although more obscure. For example, the term **Sisters**, referring to siblings, need not be qualified because it is the commonly understood meaning of the term. Its other meaning, women belonging to a religious order, is relatively less well known and should be qualified (e.g., **Sisters (Nuns)**).